

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Macrotech Polyseal, inc - LaVerkin

Utah Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Stampin' Up! Gets Lean Stamp of Approval

Client Profile:

Stampin' Up! was founded by Shelli Gardner and her sister because of their interest in the creativity of stamping. The sisters created their own manufacturing facility in Kanab, Utah, and later established another facility in Salt Lake City. Stampin' Up!® is now 16 years old, selling an exclusive line of decorative stamp sets and accessories for greeting cards, craft projects, scrapbooking, and home decor. In 2004, Stampin' Up! sold over \$200 million of product directly to the consumer through home-based workshops presented by over 42,000 demonstrators. The company's size and steady growth reflect the nationwide passion for decorative rubber stamps. The company introduces more than 100 new stamp sets and accessories each year. Stampin' Up! is a leader in the hobby and craft industry because of its fresh designs, production of high-quality, wood-mounted rubber stamps, and unique packaging based on combining stamps in sets of coordinated images. The company currently employs 50 people.

Situation:

Stampin' Up! was introduced to Lean principles through one of their vendors. They started talking about production efficiency and space utilization. As a result, the Kanab Stampin' Up! facility sent nine of their managers to Arizona to a competitor's lean training. The Stampin' Up! Kanab facility spent \$9,000 on the effort and, in the end, were not happy with the results of the training.

Solution:

Stampin' Up! was introduced to the Manufacturing Extension Partnership of Utah (MEP Utah), a NIST MEP network affiliate, when one of their field engineers stopped by the Kanab facility and mentioned that MEP Utah also offered lean training. He said that he could hold training for the entire staff at the Kanab location for the same price. The Stampin' Up! Kanab group went forward with the training and were very pleased with the outcome. First, they focused on lean concepts, such as the 5S System (Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardize, and Sustain). This led to reducing waste and increasing available floor space. Second, they worked on balancing the production line in which "work-in-process" inventories were reduced significantly. This resulted in faster cycle times, reduced production costs, and increased on-time delivery. Changes were made in the packaging area as well. For example, employees were once in stations and each one did all of the processes. Through Lean, they were able to move to cells where each employee knew all the processes, but only performed specific duties. This increased productivity by 30 percent.

Results:

- * Entire facility trained in lean principles at a cost savings of \$91,000.
- * Increased output in the rubber-molding process by 20 percent.

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- * Increased productivity in the packaging area by 30 percent.
- * Expanded floor space by 20 percent.
- * Recommended lean training to Salt Lake City distribution center.

Testimonial:

"Working with MEP has been a delight. They are a team of professionals, and their insight into everyday problems has helped us improve our efficiency. We look forward to additional training with MEP in the future."

Brett Heaton, Lean Team Leader